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Perceptions of Disability



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Introduction

- Effects of Negative Perceptions
 - Negative perceptions, discrimination, & bias lead to compromised self-esteem
 - Negative attitudes derived from sympathy, not empathy
 - implies power differential (Dovidio et. al., 2011)
- Disability self-categorization
 - Those who reject constructs of ableism have increased self-esteem (Chalk, 2016)
 - Positive disability identity predicts belonging and responses to discrimination (Nario-Redmond et. al., 2013; Raver & Chalk, 2018)
 - Problem of directionality: Does rejecting ableism improve self-esteem? *or* Does high self-esteem give lead to rejection of ableism?
- Cognitive vs. Physical Disabilities
 - Perceptions of physical disability more positive than cognitive disability (Elliot & Frank, 1990)



Purpose

- To determine if exposure to individuals who reject ableism positively influences perceptions of disability
- To understand differences in attitudes towards cognitive vs. physical disabilities

Method

- Approximately 70 per condition
 - 6 conditions
 - Participants responded by way of online survey
 - College students and community sample recruited by way of SONA and Mturk respectively

Measures and Materials

- Ted Talk Videos
 - Greta Thunberg
 - I am not your Inspiration
 - Creativity and Culture
- Short Stories
 - Cognitive disability
 - Physical disability
- The multidimensional attitudes scale toward persons with disabilities (MAS) (Findler, Vilchinsky, & Werner, 2007)
 - Participants report beliefs about disabled individual's feelings & attitudes on Likert scale to



Procedure

1. Carried out using 2x3 between groups factorial design
2. Random assignment to watch control, cognitive, or physical disability
3. Random assignment to read about an individual with either a cognitive or physical disability
4. Respond to MAS on Likert scale
5. Respond to 5 questions about personal connections to disability



Hypothesis

- Expect to find that cognitive disabilities elicit more negative perceptions than physical
- Perceptions of disability will be more positive after viewing an individual who rejects constructs of ableism

Anticipated Results

- If results are consistent with previous research, we expect to find more negative perceptions after reading about and viewing physical disability.
- We expect to find more positive perceptions following a clip of an individual who rejects constructs of ableism compared to control.

Status

- Data analysis in progress

Strengths & Limitations

- Used undergraduate and community sample increases external validity
- Attention checks
- Established survey
 - Adjusting vignette and framework may have compromised reliability and validity

Future Research

- Further examine the differences in perceptions of physical vs. cognitive disabilities



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